

News Release



**Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge
10728 County Road X61
Wapello, IA 52653**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 20, 2013

Contact:

Cathy Henry, 319/523-6982, cathy_henry@fws.gov

AGENCIES TO HOLD OPEN HOUSE APRIL 2 FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR IOWA RIVER CORRIDOR LANDS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) announces that a draft Environmental Assessment for a Comprehensive Management Plan for lands in the Iowa River Corridor will be available for public review and comment. There will be a 30-day comment period beginning April 1 with a kickoff open house on April 2 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The open house will be held at Lake Iowa Park, 2550 G Avenue, Ladora, Iowa. The park is located just south of Interstate 80. FWS staff and Iowa DNR staff will be on hand to discuss the management plan and associated documents, answer questions, and take comments.

The Comprehensive Management Plan applies only to National Wildlife Refuge (refuge) lands in Benton, Iowa, and Tama Counties. Refuge lands were acquired in the Iowa River Corridor in 1995 subsequent to the 1993 flood. Refuge lands are administered from Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge in Wapello, Iowa. But these lands are managed by the Iowa DNR as part of the Iowa River Wildlife Unit on behalf of the FWS through a Memorandum of Understanding. The Management Plan is needed to establish long term management direction, and to clarify wildlife habitat goals, agency roles, and public use opportunities. Draft Compatibility Determinations for wildlife observation and photography, trapping, environmental interpretation and education, planting of food plots, and woodcutting will also be available for comment. These documents determine whether these activities are compatible with the purposes of the refuge.

The Environmental Assessment outlines three alternatives that discuss habitat management and visitor services. The preferred alternative calls for management of grassland, forest, and wetland habitats for migratory birds and resident wildlife. It clarifies public uses allowed, and adds some infrastructure and information resources for the public to locate and recreate in the Iowa River Corridor.

The plans and assessment will be available beginning April 1 on the Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge website at http://www.fws.gov/refuge/port_louisa or by calling the Refuge office at 319-523-6982. A copy of the Environmental Assessment will be available for public review for a 30-day period at the refuge office located at 10728 County Road X61, Wapello, Iowa 52653, and the Iowa DNR office at 2805 Hwy E66, Chelsea, Iowa 52215. It will also be available at the public library in Belle Plaine, IA. Comments may be sent to the above address or emailed to cathy_henry@fws.gov.

Please contact Cathy Henry at 319-523-6982 for more information Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/portlouisianwr